

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing apparatus comprising:  
a processor; and

a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items;

means for receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

means for acquiring only designated user information items regarding said designated user from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means in response to said acquisition request, said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups; and

means for merging said acquired designated user information items from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for acquiring only designated user information items acquires said designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information that permits the use of each of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information acquisition means for acquiring said first use permission information from each of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 6 (Original): The merge information providing apparatus of the claim 5, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises means for setting up each of said plurality of user information providing means according to a request.

Claims 8-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): An information providing apparatus comprising:  
a processor; and  
a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing apparatus includes  
a merge user information providing apparatus that includes

means for providing a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user that have been merged into a single information item in response to a request, the designated user being designated by a user ID; and

a plurality of user information providing means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users that are subordinate to said means for providing said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user and that include a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said user information providing means, said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user that have been merged into said single information item only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of user information providing means for providing the plurality of user information items regarding the plurality of users communicates with said means for providing the plurality of different information items regarding the designated user that have been merged into the single information item in response to the request, and

wherein said means for providing the plurality of different information items regarding the designated user that have been merged into the single information item in response to the request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing means further comprises means for saving said plurality of different information items regarding said user.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein said plurality of different information items regarding said user includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said user belongs, and wherein said group information includes user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claims 22-24 (Canceled).

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A managing apparatus, comprising:

a merge information providing apparatus including

a processor; and

a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions,

wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, said information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of information items,

means for transmitting a setup request regarding a set up of each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, and

means for acquiring only designated user information regarding a designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, and for merging said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of information items into a single designated user information item, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items, wherein said means for acquiring and for merging communicates with a means for receiving an acquisition request relating to the designated user of the plurality of users, and wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, wherein said means for acquiring only designated user information items acquires said designated information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information that permits the use of each of said plurality of user information items providing means.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information acquisition means for acquiring said first use permission information from each of said plurality of user information items providing means.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 30 (Original): The managing apparatus of the claim 29, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises means for setting up said user information items providing means according to a request.

Claims 32-43 (Canceled).

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding [[a]] the designated user from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality



of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups; and

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items,  
said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of  
said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information  
item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user  
information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user  
information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said  
means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web  
browser via a network.

Claim 45 (Canceled).

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): An information providing method in a user  
information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means  
for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information  
items, means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users,  
and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method  
comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus that includes said user information items providing means and a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 47 (Canceled).

Claim 48 (Currently Amended): A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID;~~ said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired designated user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item; and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 49 (Canceled).

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a [[a]] plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding [[a]] the designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~

said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups; and

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 51 (Canceled).

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method of providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a means for providing a plurality of user information items

regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus that includes said user information items providing means and a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 54 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method of managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~ said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item; and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 55 (Canceled).

Claim 56 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium that includes processor-executable instructions for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a [[a]] plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding [[a]] the designated user from among said



plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~ said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups; and

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 57 (Canceled).

Claim 58 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium that includes processor-executable instructions for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an

acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus that includes said user information items providing means and a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 59 (Canceled).

Claim 60 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium that stores processor-executable instructions for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, only designated user information items regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information items providing means, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~ said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality

of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items,  
said acquired designated user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means into a single designated user information item;  
and

transmitting a set up request for a set up of each of said plurality of user information items providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 61 (Canceled).

Claim 62 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items;

means for receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

means for acquiring only a first designated user information item regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user registered to a first one of said plurality of user information providing means of which use is permitted from among a said plurality of user information items, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID;~~ said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups;

means for acquiring only a second designated user information item regarding said designated user registered to a second one of said plurality user information item providing means from among said plurality of user information items, without distinguishing said designated user as to whether or not the use of said second one of said plurality user information item providing means is permitted; and

means for merging said acquired first and second designated user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only the first designated user information item and said means for acquiring only the second designated user information item,

wherein said means for acquiring only the first designated user information item, said means for acquiring only the second designated user information item, and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 63 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises means for managing distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to at least one of said plurality user information providing means from the rest of said plurality of users.

Claim 64 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 63, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to at least one of said first or second designated user information acquisition means in response to a request from said at least one of said first or second designated user information acquisition means.

Claim 65 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said first and second designated user information acquisition means acquires said first and second designated user information items regarding said designated user from said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 66 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises means for setting up said plurality of user information providing means according to a request.

Claims 67-76 (Canceled).

Claim 77 (Currently Amended): An information providing apparatus comprising:  
a processor; and  
a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing apparatus includes  
means for providing only designated user information items regarding a designated user from among a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated

user information providing means corresponding to a distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to said designated user information providing means and/or registered to a plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, to a merge user information providing apparatus in response to a request from said merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, said designated user information items providing means, [[and]] said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with a means for acquiring only designated user information items,  
wherein said means for acquiring and a means for merging communicate with a means for receiving an acquisition request, and  
wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 78 (Previously Presented): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information



providing apparatus further comprises means for saving said designated information items regarding said designated user.

Claim 79 (Previously Presented): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein said designated information items regarding said designated user includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said designated user belongs, said group information including designated user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 80 (Canceled).

Claim 81 (Previously Presented): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 78, wherein said designated user information items providing means further comprises means for saving said designated user information regarding said designated user.

Claim 82 (Canceled).

Claim 83 (Currently Amended): A managing apparatus, comprising:  
a processor; and  
a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus includes  
a merge information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user

information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items;

means for receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

means for transmitting information regarding set up of said plurality of user information items providing means; and

means for acquiring only designated user information items regarding [[a]] the designated user registered to at least one of the plurality of user information items providing means of which use is permitted from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~ said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of said plurality of user information providing means without distinguishing the designated user by the user information providing means of which use is permitted, said merge information providing apparatus merging said acquired designated user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user item, wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring communicates with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 84 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus further comprises means for managing distinction information that distinguishes whether said designated user is registered to at least one of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 85 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to said user information acquisition means in response to a request from said user information acquisition means.

Claim 86 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said designated user information items regarding said designated user from said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 87 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus

further comprises means for setting up said plurality of user information providing means according to a request.

Claim 88 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus further comprises means for displaying a screen for setting up said merge information providing apparatus and said plurality of user information providing means.

Claims 89-99 (Canceled).

Claim 100 (Currently Amended): A merge user information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding [[a]] the designated user registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is

permitted, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID,~~ said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted; and

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claims 101-102 (Canceled).

Claim 103 (Currently Amended): An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information

items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the step of:

providing only, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said plurality of user information items providing means, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 105 (Currently Amended): A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of: receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding [[a]] the designated user registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID; said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items  
providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user  
information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user  
information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said  
means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web  
browser via a network.

Claims 106-110 (Canceled).

Claim 111 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented information providing  
method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus  
including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated  
user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information  
items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user  
information items, comprising the step of:

providing only, in response to a request from a merge user information providing  
apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said plurality of user  
information items providing means, said user information items being different between each  
of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different  
information items regarding a designated user from among said plurality of information items



regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 112 (Canceled).

Claim 113 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID~~, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claims 114-115 (Canceled).

Claim 116 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium storing a program code for providing merge user information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding ~~[[a]]~~ the designated user registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, ~~the designated user being designated by a user ID~~, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs,

user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted; and

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items,  
said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said designated user into  
a single merged designated user information item,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user  
information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user  
information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said  
means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web  
browser via a network.

Claims 117-118 (Canceled).

Claim 119 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium for providing  
information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing  
apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only  
designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user  
information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired  
designated user information items, comprising the step of:

providing only, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said plurality of user information items providing means, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 120 (Canceled).

Claim 121 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information

providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request relating to a designated user of the plurality of users in said means for receiving the acquisition request, the designated user being designated by a user ID;

acquiring, in said means for acquiring only designated user information items, from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding [[a]] the designated user registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said user information items being different between each of said means for providing said plurality of user information items, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted;

merging, in said means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means,

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items communicates with said means for acquiring only designated user information items,

wherein said means for acquiring and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request communicates with a web browser via a network.

Claim 122-124 (Canceled).